

Supervisor Brewer Supports Fixing Mental Health Care



Supervisor Jan Brewer

Nationwide, the State of Arizona ranks near the bottom in overall treatment and funding for the seriously mentally ill. The facilities at the Arizona State Hospital have become so run down, that each month an estimated \$2,800 in emergency capital improvements have become necessary.

Thankfully, Governor Hull and the State Legislature have begun to grapple with financing a new State Hospital and providing sufficient care and overall funding for the seriously mentally ill. They appointed a State Task Force on

Improving the Arizona Mental Health System that has worked diligently over the past few months to identify real solutions.

Throughout the last year, Maricopa County has also continued to forge ahead with our own responsibility to provide for the mentally ill. Maricopa County is obligated to spend \$29 million in direct funding to specifically treat the seriously mentally ill.

In addition to this, the County spends an additional \$8 million to provide treatment for mentally ill that are incarcerated in our jail and juvenile detention systems, as well as for court programs that evaluates competency to stand trial and assists with diversion programs.

Maricopa County also is proud to have entered into a public/private contract to finally reopen a Mental Crisis Center at

the Maricopa County Medical Center (MMC). In the old days, MMC -- like most other county hospitals -- maintained a crisis center as the place to bring someone with a mental crisis. For financial reasons, the County in the 1980s had to close its Center thus forcing the general public to seek outside assistance. This new public/private partnership will allow for a Mental Crisis Center to be reopened and begin providing much needed additional service to our community.

The Governor and State Legislature should be applauded for finally taking on the difficult task of providing for our seriously mentally ill. At the same time, let us remember that Maricopa County continues to step up to the plate with nearly \$37 million in funding, and we have also set the standard statewide as far as introducing vital programs and providing necessary new services for the seriously mentally ill.

County Update

Maricopa County Prepared for Y2K Concerns

✓ The county has been working on the year 2000 concern for several years and has run numerous tests to ensure all of its systems will be operational on Jan. 1, 2000. "Although we don't believe New Year's will bring any major problems, we are ready," said Chairman Brock, who represents District 1. "We have done extensive testing and have developed specific contingency plans to address any problems with the Y2K bug." The county's Emergency Operations Center will be activated on New Year's Eve and remain open as long as is necessary. The Emergency Operations Center will be staffed with representatives of several county departments, including the Sheriff's Office, Transportation, Public Health and Public Information.

Maricopa County Employees Give Back to the Community

✓ Maricopa County United Way Day was a big success. Nearly 300 runners and walkers turned out for the first 5K Run and Walk for the United Way held along the streets of downtown Phoenix. Later that day, numerous individuals took part in the United Way "Chili-for-Charity" Cookoff. These events are only one component of this year's campaign. Last year's United Way campaign raised over \$420,000. This year we hope to succeed that.

Maricopa County Partners with East Valley Cities on Flood Corridor

✓ Some time in November, the Maricopa County Flood Control District will announce a plan to partner with the Cities of Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa and Queen Creek to plan the future use of a Flood Control wash that runs from Hunt Hwy north to the Salt River Basin.